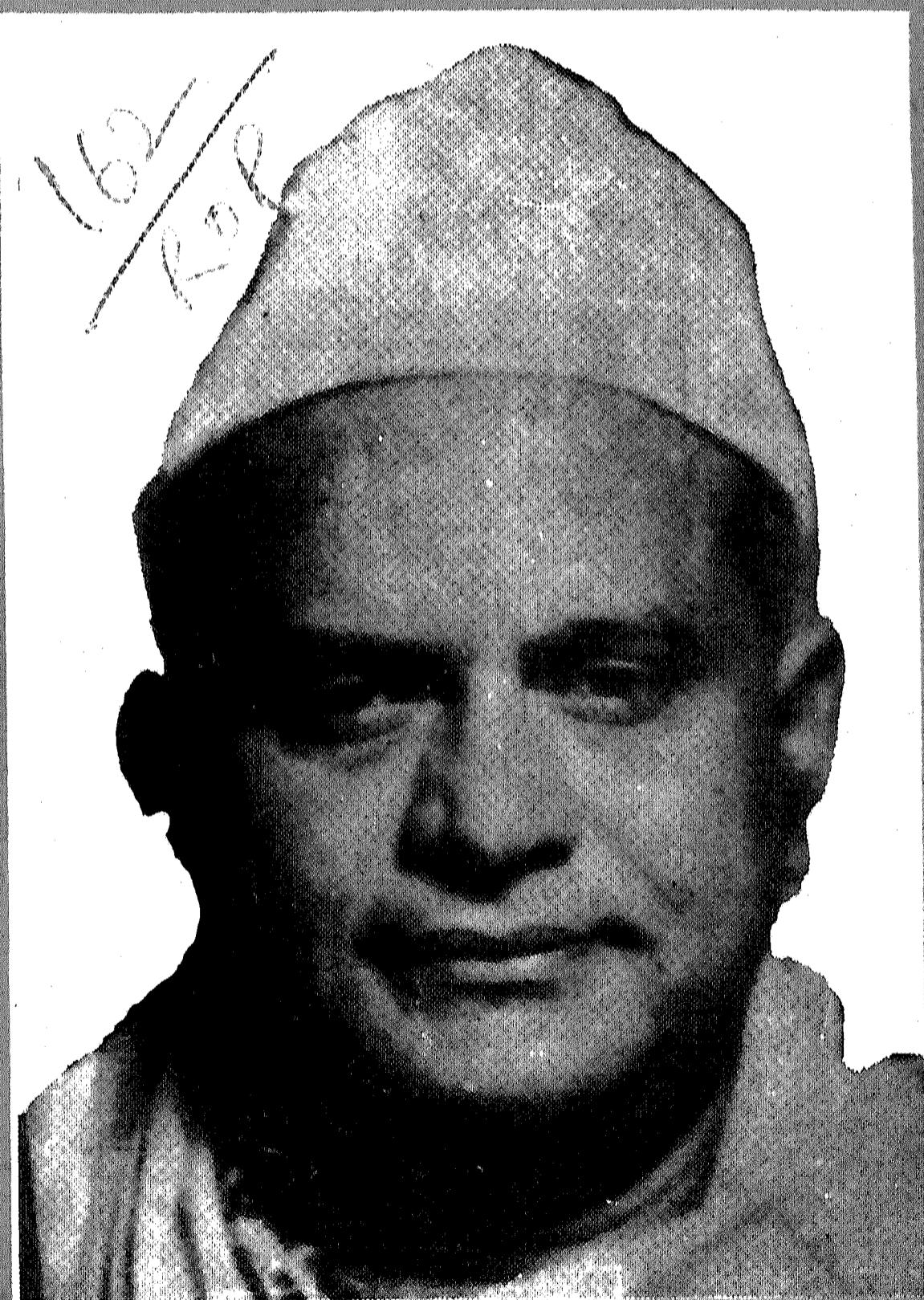


*Veteran Freedom Fighter,  
Eminent Journalist  
Smt. ~~162~~ MADDURI  
ANNAPURNAIAH*



Prof. I.V. CHALAPATHI RAO



**CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS AT HYDERABAD ON  
21-3-2000.** L - R. A.V.K. Chaitanya, I.V. Chalapathi Rao, C  
Raghavachari, Piratla Venkateswari, Potturi Venkateswara Rao,  
K. Srinivasa Reddy, M.S. Rajalingam, G. Narayana Rao, P.  
Yetukuri Prasad



**CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS AT RAJAHMUNDRY ON  
20.3.2000 AT ANNAPURNAIAH PARK.** Bezawada Rangarao,  
Ch.V.P. Murthy Raju, R. Suryaprakasa Rao, K. Hanumantha Rao,  
A.V.K. Chaitanya, K. Subbarao, K.S. Tilak, M. Jayaram.

*Veteran Freedom Fighter,*

*Eminent Journalist*

# **MADDURI ANNAPURNAIAH**

**Prof. I.V. CHALAPATHI RAO**

162/RoP

**PUBLISHED BY:**

A.V.K. Chaitanya, general secretary  
Madduri Annapoornaiah Birth Centenary  
Celebrations Committee,  
173, Lalithanagar,  
Hyderabad - 500 044.  
Tel: 7078781

# A BIOGRAPHY OF MADDURI ANNAPURNAIAH

By Prof. I. V. Chalapathi Rao

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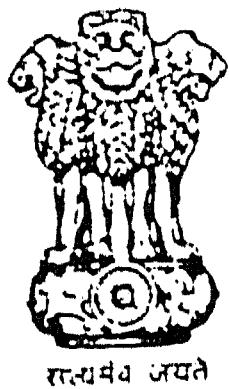
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Celebrations Committee,  
173, Lalithanagar,  
Hyderabad - 500 044.  
Tel: 7078781



MINISTER OF DEFENCE  
INDIA

31st March, 1999

Dear Com. Chaitanya,

Your note of 16th March regarding Madduri Annapoornaiah birth centenary celebrations. I am indeed glad to note that you and your colleagues have taken the initiative to celebrate the birth centenary of this eminent socialist and freedom fighter. I hope you will bring out a short biography of Madduri Annapoornaiah and also a collection of his writings if they should be available. I would also suggest that a small brochure in English and Hindi be also produced so that people from the Hindi speaking areas and states other than Andhra Pradesh also get to know about the life and work of Madduri Annapoornaiah.

*Best wishes.*

Yours sincerely

George Fernandes

Shri A.V.K. Chaitanya,  
General Secretary,  
Madduri Annapoornaiah Birth  
Centenary Celebrations Committee,  
173, Lalitha Nagar,  
Hyderabad - 500 044.  
Andhra Pradesh.

## **FROM THE PUBLISHERS DESK ...**

Veteran freedom fighter, eminent journalist and father of socialist Movement in Andhra Pradesh, Madduri Annapurnaiah Centenary celebrations were conducted for the last one year in Andhra pradesh.

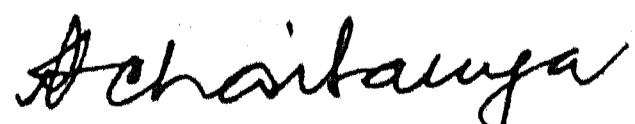
A committee was formed with Sri Tammineni Seetharam, State information Minister as president and my self as general secretary, with eminent people like Sri Vavilala Gopala Krishnayya, sardar Gauthu Latchanna Sri M.S. Rajalingam, Sri Potturi Venkateswara Rao, Sri Piratla Venkateswarlu Sri P. Janardana Reddy etc. as vice presidents and Sri Ravela Somaiah and Sri Ravinuthala Sreeramulu as secretaries and Sri P. Narasimha Raju as Treasurer. The meetings were conducted at Vijayawada, Rajahmundry, Hyderabad, Visakhapatnam, Kakinada and Komaragire (Birth Place) etc.

We are thankful to Sri Madduri Annapurnaiah Seva Samithi, Rajahmundry & Andhra Kesari yuvajana samithi Rajamahendri for making the celebrations a grand success.

Souvenir was brought out on 21.3.1999. Life sketch in Telugu written by Sri Ravinuthala Sreeramulu was released on 21-3-2000 at Hyderabad. We are thankful to Sri Sreeramulu for his untiring efforts.

As per the suggestion of Sri George Ferandes, the committee is bringing out Life Sketch in English. We are thankful to Sri I.V. Chalapati Rao Editor, Triveni for Readily agreeing for writing the Life Sketch in english. We are thankful to Akruthi offset printers Hyderabad for printing the book nicely in a short time.

We are thankful to number of people who have helped us to publish this book. We hope that this will be received well throughout India. This will enable the people know about Late Madduri Annapurnaiah who was imprisoned for 14 1/2 years in the freedom movement, an eminent journalist and father of socialist movement in Andhra Pradesh.



Hyderabad  
1-5-2000

AVK CHAITANYA  
General Secretary  
Celebrations Committee



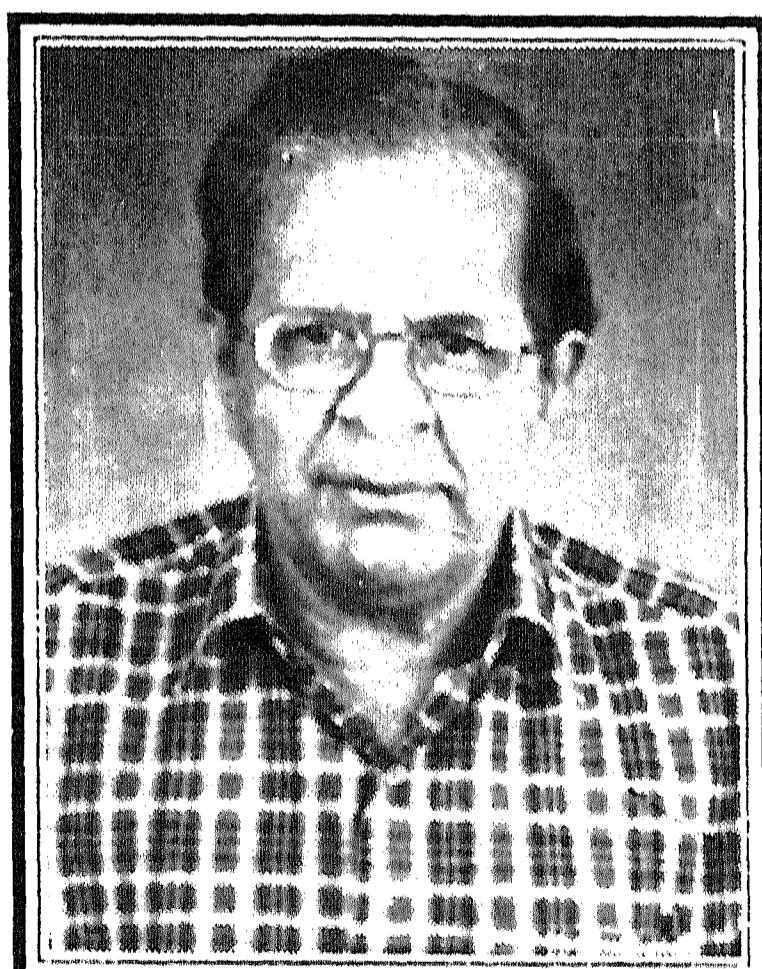
MADDURI ANNAPURNAIAH  
20/3/1899 - 11/9/1954



MADDURI VENKATARAMANAMMA  
(Wife)



KOLLURI RAJESWARI  
(Daughter)



MADDURI JAYARAM  
(Son)

## PREFACE

If it was bliss to be alive in India in the early 1920's, it was heavens to be young. Madduri Annapoornaiah was not only alive but young at that time. Born in March 1899, he was nearly 21 in December 1920, when he threw up his studies and jumped into the struggle for freedom.

The Gandhian hurricane was sweeping everyone and everything before it. The Boycott call had drawn thousands of young persons away from schools and colleges. Madduri Annapoornaiah had to take his B.A., Final exam a few months hence. But he could not wait for his Degree to respond to his heart's dictates. In any case whoever needed an Academic Degree for struggling and sacrificing in the course of one's National Independence? He was young. He never took the exam - and never looked back. For about 14 years he was sentenced and locked behind prison bars out of the approximately 33 years that he lived after December 1920. He died at a comparatively young age of 55 in September 1954.

A legend in his life time, he was among the foremost who founded the socialist movement and party in Andhra and South India. In jail when the congress socialist party was launched in 1934, he lost no time, after his release, in organising a branch in Andhra. The Rajahmundry 1936 conference of Andhra Provincial congress socialist party elected him as its provincial secretary, with communist leader P. Sundarayya as one of the joint secretaries. He started the first socialist journal, 'NAVASAKTI' in Telugu.

Behind prison bars for most of the war period, he was again elected provincial secretary of Andhra Pradesh socialist party in 1948.

I could not help hearing him after I was elected to the National Executive in 1947, and started moving into the national arena. More so after I was elected as one of the national joint secretaries of the party in 1948. I eagerly looked forward to meeting him, when I set

out on my first organisational tour of Andhra areas of the then Madras Presidency. Much younger to him, both in age and political experience, I was happy when he received me with affection and understanding. He was now like an statesman whom everyone looked upto.

A younger generation of workers and leaders was coming up and taking charge. I saw A. Chakradhar being elected to the National Executive, and K.S. Tilak elected provincial secretary of the party. I saw Annapoornaiah gradually losing interest in politics and drifting towards what is described as spirituality, it was a great loss to socialism and the Socialist Party.

The old order is to change and yield place to a new one. Party it will do not one any good to forget that it was the cerodu that brought forth the New. Without the former the latter would have been now here.

Madduri Annapoornaiah laid the foundation of the Socialist Party in Andhra. His .., determination and suffering natured the seed and helped it into a most. He will always be remembered as an early pioneer of socialism and one of those stalwarts who spread it to the entire South. No history of Socialism in India.will he complete without giving him a pride of place in it.

His biography, being brought out in the centenary year of his birth, will be a tribute long overdue to him. This will enable the younger generation to take inspiration from his life and struggles and rise above the immediate gains, and aim high in life.

- Prem Bhasin

## A WORD

I thank Sri A.V.K. Chaitanya, Secretary of Madduri Annapoornaiah Centenary Celebrations Committee, Sri C.V. Rajagopala Rao former resident editor of "**Andhra Patrika**" and Sri. R. Sree Ramulu, the well-known writer who came to me and suggested that I should write the biography of late Sri Madduri Annapoornaiah, the renowned Journalist and freedom fighter. I cheerfully undertook the onerous task because I always held Sri Annapoornaiah in high esteem for his services to the cause of Indian Independence, sacrifice for the future of the nation and qualitative contribution to the field of Journalism. Moreover it is my faith that the lives of great patriots and spiritual leaders will motivate and inspire the youth by instilling higher values in their minds.

I am particularly grateful to Sri R. Sreeramulu who placed at my disposal valuable material and discussed with me several aspects of Annapoornaiah's life and work.

**I.V. Chalapathi Rao,**  
**-Author**

## INTRODUCTION

More than half a century has elapsed since India became independent. We are on the threshold of a new millennium. A galaxy of freedom fighters and founding fathers including Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Annie Besant, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Bipinchandrapal, Lala Lajpatirai and Mahatma Gandhi played a pioneering role in the struggle for freedom. Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhas Chandra Bose, Jaya Prakash Narayan and many others made substantial contribution to the freedom movement. Mahatma Gandhi is rightly regarded as the Father of the Nation for his unique role in unifying the country. He was a towering personality who brought under his unquestioned leadership men of different political persuasions and communities.

It is common knowledge that Independence movement was a "Mahayagna" for the success of which "Samidhas" (sacrificial twigs) were contributed by patriots of different political parties - Congress Socialist, Communist and other parties. It is for this reason that Mahatma Gandhi with his altruistic and prophetic vision recommended that Indian National Congress should cease to exist since its only objective of winning independence for the country was realised in 1947. Gandhiji was of the opinion that Congress was a movement but not a political party. Thereby hangs a tale that can wait!

The lion's share of the credit for winning independence for the country is hogged by a handful of high-profile leaders and those who glittered on the seats of power, and little attention is paid to others although some of them made equal contribution by courting incarceration and making great sacrifices for the country. As a result of this, a few persons enjoyed the fruits of freedom along with publicity in the media and officially doctored history, while others are relegated to the limbo of obscurity. But time will come when the memory of such neglected heroes will be resurrected and history will be rewritten to correct the imbalances.

It is in this context we should consider the life and work of Madduri Annapoornaiah, an ardent patriot, an intrepid Journalist, an eminent freedom fighter, the architect of the leftist parties and the Father of the Socialist movement in Andhra. He was a devotee of Bal Gangadhar Tilak and a follower of Jayaprakash Narayan and a close associate of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. In fact he was known as 'Andhra Netaji'. When Bose escaped from the jail to conduct the war of independence from outside, mobilizing international support and starting the famous Azad Hind Fauz, he wrote to Annapoornaiah a confidential letter which shows his love and confidence. It was through Annapoornaiah's efforts that Gandhiji appreciated the patriotism and heroism of Alluri Sitaramaraju, Annapoornaiah's classmate and friend.

Just as Rama lived in the forest for 14 years at his father's behest and Pandavas remained in the forest for 12 years, Anna Poornaiah suffered imprisonment for 14 years. While Rama and Pandavas enjoyed the company of their spouses and kin, Annapoornaiah had no such solace. We know, Nelson Mandela set a world record by remaining in the jail for 35 years for fighting against Apartheid (racial discrimination) in South Africa. Gandhiji himself spent a total of 2,338 days of his life in British Jails. He said "The road to freedom goes through prison. We must widen the prison gates and enter them as a bridegroom enters the bride's room". To a book written by himself, Gandhiji gave the title "From Errawada Mandir". Jail was a Mandir to him! Annapoornaiah was not only in Jails for 14 years but was tortured and lathi charged when the police raided Gautami Asram of Sitanagaram. He suffered head injuries. Moreover he could neither perform nor attend his daughter's marriage as the jail authorities refused parle. His valiant wife Ramanamma fell ill and died in penury when he was still in the prison waiting for permission which never came!

Annapoornaiah was an outstanding journalist who edited several weeklies in Telugu - the "*Congress*", "*Navasakti*", "*Jai Bharat*" and "*Velugu*". Those were the days when Andhra Pradesh produced

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## Childhood and Early Life

Madduri Annapoornaiah's grand father Madduri Kodandarama Dikshitulu was a wealthy person who lived in the village of Komarigiri which is a few miles from Pithapuram. He was known for his generosity and acts of charity. It was his principle to entertain guests at his house everyday at lunch time. No hungryman ever left his home without a sumptuous lunch or dinner. Persons of all castes took advantage of his generous disposition. In fact he used to wait for guests before he had his own meal. He actually followed the upanishidic injunction "Atithi Devo Bhava" (Treat your guest as God)

The Maharaja of Pithapuram who was known for his princely philanthropy came to know about him and wanted to test him. He wondered how a person belonging to middle class Brahmin family could entertain people to hospitality on such a liberal scale. One day he paid a sudden visit to his house accompanied by a hundred followers. All of them were disguised as pilgrims. They asked him to serve them food. Dikshitulu received them very politely and sent his men to bring four bags of rice urgently. Within minitures food was cooked and all the guests were satisfied with the hospitality. The Maharaja of Pithapuram who was himself known as "Abhinava Karna" appreciated his generosity and presented him a few acres of Inam land. People of Kakinada know that the Maharaja of Pithapuram himself gave properties worth several lakhs of rupees as charity.

Satawadhani Challapilli Venkata Sastri made a reference to Madduri Dikshitulu in his Kathalu- Gathalu (page 31) He wrote "There lived in Komarigiri village a vedic scholar and great philanthropist called Madduri Dikshitulu. I had the good fortune of visiting him in the company of my guru. When Dikshitulu became very old, I heard from reliable people that Maharaja of Pithapuram appreciated his charitable disposition and decided to honour him. Story goes that the Maharaja was in the bathroom when Dikshitulu went to see him. On hearing about his

visit the Maharaja came out of the bath room with wet clothes! It is good to know that. Annapoornaiah was the grand son of such a great man.

It will be interesting and of educative value to know about Madduri Annapoornaiah's childhood and early life. It is common knowledge that the future character and greatness of persons will be reflected in their own childhood and early life.

As the old saying goes "The child is the father of the man". Annapoornaiah was the third son of his parents Jayaramaiah and Rajamma. Of his three brothers the eldest was Kodanda Rama Dikshitulu, the second was Buchi Venkaiah and the youngest was Krishnamurthy. It is a matter of well known psychology that the character and conduct of a person will generally be shaped by the example of his father, the training of the mother and the inspiration of the teacher. Annapoornaiah's parents treated him with great affection and introduced him to our cultural heritage and the ethical values contained in our scriptures and the epics like the Ramayana and the Mahabharata.

He was born on 20th March 1899 in Komaragiri in the East Godavari district. Naturally his primary education was in Peddapuram, a place of importance not far from his place. After his scholastic career he joined Pithapur Raja's Collegiate. High school Kakinada in 1911, as a student of III form. It will be of great interest to the reader to know that the great patriot and freedom fighter Alluri Sitamaraju was his classmate. Annapoornaiah had noble ideals, respect for values and love of freedom, even in those days. Pithapur Rajah's college is one of the premier institutions of higher education in Andhra with history of more than 150 years. In those days Brahmarishi Raghupati Venkataratnam Naidu, principal of PR college and Kandukuri Viresalingam Pantulu of Rajahmundry were great educationists and social reformers, who exercised their wholesome influence on the minds of the youngmen and young women. Annapoornaiah's elder brother Kodandarama Dikshitulu was in the senior intermediate class at that time. He was the favourite

student of Raghupathi Venkataratnam Naidu. In those days the college which was known for its social and cultural activities, celebrated the coronation of George -V in December 1911. The students who were enthusiastic to participate in extra-curricular activities wanted to put on boards a popular play "Sasirekha Parinayam" on that occasion. Dikshitulu and Annapoornaiah took an active part in the drama, Dikshitulu filled the role of the heroine. Sasirekha. Annapoornaiah and Alluri Sitaramaraju also participated in the drama as handmaids. The fact that they were given feminine roles shows that, they were handsome boys with fine features. Annapoornaiah's brother Dikshitulu was known for his histrionic talents. That performance of the two younger boys also received praise from audience including elders and elite of the town. It is a matter of special interest to note that Alluri Sitarama Raju played an additional role as "Narada" and sang melodiously. It is really a surprise how Sitarama Raju who was so tender and delicate could become in his later life a terror to the British Government. His name is permanently recorded in history as the hero who had led a revolt against the foreign Government and sacrificed his life for the freedom of the mother land. Later on Annapoornaiah was expressing his surprise how Sitarama Raju with his tender feet used to run bare footed in the thick jungles with sharp stones and thorns!

This drama in which, Annapoornaiah, his brother and Sitarama Raju participated was enacted in synchronisation with an auspicious event in the college. The coveted title of "Rao Bahadur" was conferred upon the principal Raghupati Venkataratnam Naidu. Annapoornaiah who had veneration for the principal was extremely happy as though he himself had received the honour. But Sitaramaraju was indifferent. Obviously he was not impressed with the honour because it was conferred by the British Govt. This did not appeal to his intense patriotism and love of freedom.

In connexion with the coronation of George V, photographs of the king and along with them medals of German silver were

distributed among the students. Young Annapoornaiah out of boyish curiosity managed to acquire 5 or 6 medals. With great affection he presented one of the medals to his dearest friend Sitamaraju - But Sitamaraju threw it away in anger. Annapoornaiah was astonished at his friend's behaviour. When he wanted to know why he behaved like that, Raju said "You, mad fellow!. This medal is a symbol of our slavery. I have no use for it". Having spoken these words he left the place in a huff.

Annapoornaiah took some time to recover from the shock. This incident proved to be an eye opener and turning point in his life. He began to appreciate Raju's love of freedom and in course of time he too developed ardent patriotism.

Raju used to tell Annapoornaiah that he had no interest in English education because he was of the firm opinion that B.A., degree was not necessary for the service of the country. However Annapoornaiah was of the view that he should acquire a law degree along with the B.A., degree, so that he could settle in life as a lawyer to be independent in life. He did not like to accept any government job or employment in a private agency. He thought, a person could not lead an independent life unless he had economic independence. Otherwise he would be at the mercy of the people who would hire him and engage his services as they liked. Therefore he preferred the lawyer's profession which could be an honest source of liveli-hood with enough freedom to think and do what he wanted.

His friend Sitamaraju often told him that he would like to become a Sanyasi. To the surprise of every one he suddenly discontinued his studies and disappeared. For a long time his whereabouts were not known to Annapoornaiah.

One evening in summer in 1917 Annapoornaiah was at the Booking Office of Pithapuram Railway station to buy a ticket for Kakinada. He heard somebody calling him "Annapoornaiah". Initially he did not pay any heed to the call as he was under the impression that it was not for him. When he again heard the call, he turned his head to find a handsome-looking youngman in the

attire of a Sanyasi. Recognising the voice and looking at him he could identify the person as his boy-hood friend Sitamaraju - It was a pleasant surprise to him. He embraced Raju and enquired why he donned the saffron clothes of a Sanyasi. Raju told him that he already expressed his desire to him in their childhood that he would be a Sanyasi and he was true to his word. Annapoornaiah had vibrations which made him feel that he was in the presence of a great man. He expressed his respect, changed his style of speaking and henceforth began to address him as "sir" and requested him to accompany him to Kakinada - The Sanyasi said that it was not possible. Annapoornaiah expressed his desire to know the future programme of his friend and where he was going. Raju informed him that his life was dedicated to the service of the people and the country as he told him in his child hood. Annapoornaiah further enquired whether he thought of joining Annie Besant's Home Rule movement. Raju abruptly terminated the conversation and went away after speaking his last words "you will hear about me in due course!"

"Tell me who are your friends. I will tell you what kind of character you have" so goes the old maxim. Judged from this standard we find that Madduri. Annapoornaiah and Alluri Sitamaraju shared more or less the same tastes and temperaments. Both of them loved independence. Both of them were imbued with idealism. Both of them were men of action. But their paths diverged. The former chose the path of non-violence and the latter opted for violence. The former wanted to be a lawyer and the latter opted for the role of a revolutionary. The former took some time to reach his decision. The latter sprang into instant action. Because of Raju's towering personality and supreme scorn for British imperialism he made the greatest sacrifice in history. Madduri too sacrificed for his country though on a minor scale. They are twin incomparables!



## Joins Freedom Movement

Even as a student of the intermediate class Annapoornaiah made his debut in politics. In those days politics was directly related to the freedom movement. Students were attracted to the Home Rule Movement (1917) under the leadership of Annie Besant. Although she was a foreigner by birth, she was one of the pioneers of the Freedom Movement in India and made notable contribution to it. Even top leaders like Gandhiji came under her influence. Her inspiring public speeches stirred the patriotism of the youth most of whom readily joined the movement. Annapoornaiah never ate his food in those days without reading "New India" which contained Annie Besant's articles. Her's were not words but sparks of fire that ignited patriotism.

The British Govt. passed the G.O. No. 559 prohibiting students from entering politics. Annie Besant's disciple Sri Ram used to visit Kakinada as a popular leader. Students used to like his speeches. Principal Venkatarantam Naidu sent round a circular to the classes instructing the students not to attend public meetings addressed by Sri Ram. From the beginning Annapoornaiah had an independent mind. He liked adventure and enterprise without fear of danger. So he attended the meetings of Sri Ram in defiance of the Principal's instructions. He did not stop with this. He took a bold step. He himself went to the principal and informed him that he attended the forbidden meetings and was prepared to accept whatever punishment would be meted out to him. The Principal being a kind man, appreciated his truthfulness and let him off with a warning.

Annie Besant used to write fiery articles against the British Government in "New India". Annapoornaiah used to read them with great interest. It was more important to him than food. As expected his love of independence and political leanings got further strengthened when he read Annie Besant's spiritual articles. On account of his dynamism and popularity among the students he was elected as secretary of the Excelsior students union of PR College. It was a

great honour. For two years he held this position and played a leadership role in literary, cultural and other student activities. He was bold enough to declare from the platform that India was eligible for self-government and that the British Government should not deny it.

As there was no B.A., degree class in PR College, he had to go to Rajahmundry to prosecute his further studies in Govt. Arts College at Rajahmundry. P.R. College of Kakinada and Govt. Arts College of Rajahmundry were two oldest colleges in Andhra Pradesh. The former was run by the Maharaja of Pithapuram and the latter was a Govt. College. Students from all over Andhra Pradesh used to join these colleges for their under-graduate studies. It is interesting to know that these two colleges were in existence long before the Andhra University was established. They had very reputed professors and principals. Rajahmundry college had P.G. Courses too.

Because of his experience as secretary of the Excelsior union Annapoornaiah was elected as secretary of Metcalfe union at Rajahmundry. One of the special features of Rajahmundry Arts College was that it had famous European Principals like Metcalfe and Couldry who inspired the students. Sir S. Radhakrishnan and 'Andhra Ratna' Duggirala Gopalakrishnaiah worked as lecturers in that college. Kandukuri Viresalingam Pantulu was a Pandit. Such was the reputation of that college.

In one of his speeches Annapoornaiah strongly criticised the British Government saying that it was mainly responsible for the poverty of India. The then European principal who was angry took him to task. He made him stand before the students and said "The man who is standing before you is a big thief."

This remark drew laughter from the students because they already formed an impression that Annapoornaiah was a dare devil and that he would not hesitate to defy the authorities - Teachers thought that he was a reckless idealist and a fearless patriot.

Annapoornaiah himself expressed his views (during 1920) through articles which appeared in serial in "Jaibharat" weekly under the title "My experiences" - He wrote - "I was fond of politics right from my student days Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak was my political Guru. I resolved to enter the field of public work to serve the people even when I studied Intermediate at Kakinada."

"In the special Congress session held on 1-9-1920 at Calcutta Gandhiji introduced a resolution suggesting that students should boycott educational institutions and enter the field of public service - I was attracted to this resolution which was unanimously passed in the congress. Unfortunately my domestic circumstances prevented me from implementing my resolution. My mother and brothers asked me not to be hasty. It was absolutely necessary for me to become a graduate and stand on my feet to support my mother, wife and two brothers. Although I was married, my wife had not yet joined me. As I was still a student when I wrote to her about my intention to join the non - co-operation movement, she wrote her first letter dissuading me from doing it on the plea that it would lead to great hardships. Elections to the Legislative Assemblies would be completed on the 3rd November Gandhiji declared that Non-Cooperation could bring Self-Government within a year. It was incredible!"

In the meantime Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramaiah a great leader of Andhra happened to visit Rajahmundry to address a cooperative society. I was an admirer of Pattabhi's paper "Janma Bhoomi" which contained beautiful comments etc. I met Dr. Pattabhi along with some of my fellow students to seek his advice - He said that it would bring glory. Nyapati Subba Rao Pantulu also came to the same place and joined in the discussion. He advised us to remember what happened in 1907 in connexion with the Vandemataram Movement - He pointed out how Gadicherla Hari Sarvottam Rao, Josula Ramachandra Rao and other students who boycotted studies in connexion with the movement suffered greatly." Thus he wrote in his memoirs.

If any Nyapati Subba Rao had cautioned Annapoornaiah and his friends against the risk of boycotting their studies. However, caught as he was on the horns of a dilemma Annapoornaiah spent sleepless nights thinking about the decision considering all the pros and cons. At that time he remembered the shining example of his boy - hood friend - Alluri Sitamaraju - At once he took his decision to stop his studies and to dedicate his life to the service of the country. The die was cast and like Caesar he decided to cross the Rubicon!

It was December 2, 1920. Annapoornaiah went to the residence of Dr. Subrahmanyam, one of the ardent patriots and freedom fighters. He joined Dr. Subrahmanyam's National School as a lecturer. The school was preparing students for the service of the country and the freedom movement. This was the starting point of his eventful political life which was a saga suffering and sacrifice.



## "The Congress" Paper

Annapoornaiah became a journalist by editing "The Congress" weekly on 22.3.1922. It was originally launched by Annapoornaiah as a cyclostyled weekly on behalf of Andhra Yuvajana Swaraja Sabha. Krovvidi Linga Raju who later became a freedom fighter was the Associate editor of the paper. The government sentenced its Editor Annapoornaiah to imprisonment for 18 months on the charge of sedition for publishing a provocative article in the weekly. Annapoornaiah served the sentence in Rajahmundry and Vellore jails from February 1923 to June 13, 1924. In those days jail going was a common experience for all freedom fighters. Gandhiji used to call the prison "Mandir" - All over the country great leaders who fought for Indian Independence suffered incarceration. After his release in November, 1924. Annapoornaiah joined the Goutami Satyagraha Ashram started by Dr. B. Subrahmanyam at Seetanagaram near Rajahmundry. The Congress weekly began to appear from that Ashram. Along with Annapoornaiah Krovvidi Linga Raju, Ramachandruni Venkatappa also worked for the weekly. The paper became very popular and created patriotic feelings and nationalism among its readers. Desoddharaka Kasinadhuni Nageswara Rao presented to the Ashram a German Treadle, Tip Top printing machine and 3000 pounds of types - Initially the paper had 600 subscribers. The number of readers gradually increased. Perhaps it was the only paper which was fearlessly working for the freedom movement in Andhra - The articles were published in simple conversational Telugu which attracted more and more youngmen as readers. Among other things it published lives and stories of the revolutionaries from 1857 up to 1929. These stories and incidents served the patriotic purpose of appealing to youngmen and young women to join the freedom movement.

Let us have a few samples of the key sentences in the editorials of "the Congress":

### **1922 November 22**

Our country is a wish-ful filling tree (kalpa Vriksha) but its fruits are not available to our country men. They are eaten and enjoyed by others.

### **1925 August 13**

The British Government is solely responsible for the Hindu-Muslim riots in our country. The Government is fermenting troubles and creating quarrels so that they can get entrenched in our country.

### **1922 May, 29**

What happens in our country is not a trial but puppet show.

### **1925, September 8**

"We are prepared to face the consequences of the resolution of complete independence passed in the conference of Andhra Province. We are prepared to do any thing for the realisation of that goal. If necessary we will set up an independent party.

### **1929 January 14**

As we see the misdeeds of the police we find that the end of the British Rule is not far. Police Officers like Mustafa Alikhan and Dappula Subba Rao, who removed the clothes of the heroes who wore khadder and beat them up, are not human beings. They are Demons - Dussasanas.

It is interesting to see the following comments published in "Congress" in connection with the Salt Satyagraha of 1930.

"When your country lives and prospers, what does it matter even if you die?".

What use is there even if you live when your country goes to the dust?

"The Congress" published a special number in 1926 July in connection with the birthday celebrations of Alluri Sitaramaraju at Rajahmundry. It was Madduri who spoke to Gandhiji about

Sitarama Raju. When Gandhiji was asked to express his opinion about Sitaramaraju, he wanted them to send particulars of Sitaramaraju's life. When he received a detailed account of his life, he expressed his opinion as follows: "I do not have sympathy or admiration for the armed revolution but I cannot refrain from expressing my appreciation for a man like Sitarama Raju who is a young man of simplicity, character and courage. If the particulars supplied by Annapoornaiah are correct he is not a rebel - He is a great 'Hero' How good it will be if all the young men of your country cultivate Sitarama Raju's patriotism, courage, valour, skill and constructive ability and use them in a non-violent manner for winning India's Independence!".

The same opinion Gandhiji expressed in "Young India" dated July 18, 1929. Gandhiji visited Sitanagar Ashram in May 1929 and studied the working of "the Congress", printing office. Subsequently he wrote in "Young India" expressing his unreserved appreciation of the work being done there. He wrote. "*The staff of this paper were sitting on mats and writing on the desks placed on the floor. I was happy to observe this*" - Madduri Annapoornaiah and Pandiri Mallikarjunarao had lengthy discussions with Gandhiji on violence and non-violence. Writing in his 'Young India' dated 16th May 1929 Gandhiji stated "*A Telugu weekly is being published from the Ashram under the name 'Congress'* - *It has now become* self-supporting. Its editor *Madduri Annapoornaiah* had the honour of going to the jail on charge of sedition for publishing the paper. *Still the paper is alive.*"

"The paper had humble beginnings - It was cyclostyled on a fool-scrap size paper. Gradually its circulation improved. Income increased - Now it is coming out in royal size with 14 pages of matter. It prints only a limited number of advertisements. It will not accept advertisements dealing with foreign goods, drugs etc. This paper stands for complete Independence, but not mere Dominion Status. They have proudly announced this policy in their report. Regular publication of Hindi lessons in Telugu script is its special feature".

Among the prominent persons who visited Sitanagaram we should mention the name of Kotamraju Rama Rao, one of the outstanding journalists who was the editor of "The National Herald" of Lucknow. He was close to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. He praised the work done by the staff of the Congress paper. He remarked that they were doing every thing in a neat manner and performing their duties efficiently in all aspects of work including type - setting, composing, cleaning and distribution. It was functioning on democratic lines. There was no difference between editor and composer.

Madduri Annapoornaiah, the Editor of the paper was charged for sedition and sentenced to an imprisonment for 2 1/2 years for publishing on 7.5.1929 a one-act play "Chichchula Pidugu" written by Ramachandruni Venkatappa who was the Associate Editor of the paper. As soon as Annapoornaiah was imprisoned he issued the following statement:

"My arrest is not a surprise as it comes after the arrest of my leader Bulusu Sambamurthy. As we observe the arrests of young men that have been made throughout the country, it is evident that the officers are bent upon brutally suppressing the Independence movement. We look upon it as another attack made with evil motive on our "Congress Paper". We are not afraid of this. When two editors were imprisoned during this year, we did not get discouraged. We continued to publish our paper. I am confident that even after my imprisonment our flag will be kept flying and the people will continue to extend their cooperation and support." Thus Annapoornaiah wrote-

When a prominent leader Kala Venkat Rao, Secretary East Godavari District Congress wanted to send a telegram condemning the action of the government in arresting Annapoornaiah, the Telegraph office refused to accept the Telegram.

In the absence of Annapoornaiah, Krovvidi Lingaraju became the Editor. When an article was published in "Congress" in March 1931, referring to the hanging of Sardar Bhagat Singh under the

title "Veerabali" Krovvidi Llingaraju was arrested in August 1931, Ramachandruni Venkatappa filled the gap as its editor. On his own release in September 1931 Annapoornaiah rejoined as Editor and continued till January 1932.

The paper which was started in 1922 closed down in 1932 as all the leaders were in jail and Government prohibited its publication. Its demise was a blow to the freedom movement.

During this decade of its useful service to the community and to the cause of Indian independence the paper created history.

## Chitchula Pidugu

As the story of "*Chitchula Pidugu*" is closely connected with the publication of the "Congress", let us know details about this drama.

"*Chitchula Pidugu*" is a one - act play written by Ramachandruni Venkatappa a resident of Tangutur, Ongole taluka. He had his education in Nellore. He got his name changed as "Achyutuni Venkatrao" in 1921 and got arrested. While working for the Congress party in its campaign for Independence, he was sentenced to two months imprisonment in Rajahmundry where he came into contact with Bulusu Sambamurthy. He shifted his residence to Kakinada and worked as Sambamurthy's right handman. At Sambamurthy's instance he joined the Ashram. He was well versed in English, Sanskrit and Telugu and was reputed as a good writer and researcher. One of his well known publications was a book based upon extensive research to prove that Madras belonged to Telugus - In his preface to the drama Chitchula Pidugu the author has candidly stated that the purpose of writing the play was to create among Andhras an ardent desire for independence.



## Chitchula Pidugu and After

The following is the analysis and out-line of the play 'Chitchula Pidugu'. In the first scene, the hero Mangal Pande delivers an inspiring address in an aside in powerful language: "You British devil! Has not your anger subsided? Hasn't your thirst quenched? In the second scene Huson Bow a British soldier shoots Pande - Then Pande stabs Huson Bow with his sword. Huson Bow fell down mortally wounded. As he made a futile attempt to get up, a Sepoy killed him with the bayonet of his rifle. Afterwards an army officer named Wheeler came on the spot and issued orders to arrest Mangal Pande. The Jamedar informed him that none of the soldiers would touch Mangal Pande as he was a Brahmin. Another Army officer called Hersey came with his two sons and tried to kill Pande. Pande wanted to commit suicide shooting himself as he was un-willing to die at the hands of the enemy. He did not die. The jamedar admitted him in the hospital. In the third scene Pande who was going to be hanged spoke the following words addressed to the British: "If your nation cares for the lives of its people, you should quit our country" With these words he was executed.

As the author introduced the theory of Non-violence towards the end of the play Editor Annapoornaiah deleted it. Considering his play as highly objectionable as it incited the people to revolt against the government, the Government tried Annapoornaiah under Sections 124A + 153 A and sentenced him to imprisonment for 2 years and a fine of Rs. 500, in default imprisonment for a further period of six months. The play was banned under G.O.Ms. No. 906 Dt. 6.9.29.

Although there were prohibitive orders against the drama, it was put on boards in 1929 by the Guntur Youth League. For the successful staging of the drama Amancharla Gopalarao, Konvalli Subrahmanyam, Madabhushi Venkatachari and the then Municipal Chairman Barrister Nadimpalli Narasimharao managed without attracting the notice of the police. It was witnessed by the elite

of the town including '*Desa Bhakta*' Konda Venkatappaiah. Although the police came to know about it later on, they were helpless to prosecute them in the absence of evidence. They could not arrest any one of them. Lot of pressure was brought upon Annapoornaiah and LingaRaju to disclose the name of the author. But they refused to reveal the name as they strictly abided by the ethical code of the Press.

When the ban was removed in 1950 the author published it and dedicated it to Madduri Venkata Ramanamma who was no more. Inspite of Venkatappa's willingness to give a statement in the Court that he was the author, Annapoornaiah prevented him from doing so. Besides, while going to the jail Annapoornaiah said to Venkatappa "I never feel that, I have to go to the jail on account of the play which you had written. I have to accept complete responsibility because I have not only witnessed it and appreciated but also published it. Therefore you should not feel for it. I am not writing this for courtesy, but whole heartedly". How noble and self sacrificing!

While replying to the charges against him in this connection Annapoornaiah made a lengthy statement before the Judge. "My purpose is to present people a picture of the Indian Independence war which was fought for the first time in 1857. This is a true story which is recorded in history. This story is the basis for "Chitchula Pidugu". 1857 is the date of Sepoy Mutiny.

The author of "Chitchula Pidugu" Sri Venkatappa subsequently explained "the War of Indian Independence by V.D. Savarkar, the History of the Mutiny of Charles Band and Lord Robert's "My forty Years life in India" gave me inspiration to write the play."

"Chitchula Pidugu" came to be discussed in Madras Legislative Council. The conduct of the political prisoners was miserable till the reforms were made in the Jail Rules in 1929. The prisoners were subjected to lot of hardship and inconvenience because proper facilities were not available. The prisoners suffered a great deal.

One of the political prisoners Jatin Das undertook a fast unto death and died after 63 days on 14.9.1929 - Even when he was on fast, Acharya Ranga who was then a professor in the Pachiappa's College, Madras held a mammoth public meeting on the banks of the Godavari river expressing support to the fast. A resolution was passed to the effect and extensive publicity was given to the prevailing jail conditions.

The demise of Jatin Das opened the eyes of the British government on conditions in the prisons and a decision was taken to change the jail rules and classify the political prisoners under categories A.B.C. But these rules did not come into force when Annapoornaiah was arrested in 1929. They were not yet implemented. Annapoornaiah never appealed to the Jail authorities to apply the revised rules to him. The Government too had no intention of treating him softly. The matter came up for discussion in the Madras Legislature Council. The Anantapur paper "Sri Sadhana" referred to this case and expressed its regret that Annapoornaiah was not given just and reasonable treatment inspite of the fact that the Portfolio of law was handled by an Indian, Krishna Nayar. Sri Satyamoorty, the Leader of the Opposition condemned the action of the government as unjust and atrocious, because a great patriot like Annapoornaiah should not have been treated on par with common criminals. A member of the Government moved a resolution that Annapoornaiah should be dealt with seriously. Reacting to it, Satyamoorty said "The Government member who brought this resolution will remain a non-entity in the history of Madras, but Annapoornaiah whom he wants to punish severely will be written in history in golden letters. The coming generations will always remember him as a person who worked for the honour and Independence of the country."

### **Protagonists of Poorna Swaraj (Complete Independence)**

Bulusu Sambamurthy may be considered as one of the extremists in Congress movement. Annapoornaiah regarded him as his "Guru". In 1921 September Sambamurthy, introduced a resolution

at the East Godavari political conference that congress should work for "Poorna Swaraj" - Surprisingly even a man like "Andhra Kesari" Tanguturi Prakasam himself instead of giving his support had cautioned them to go slow. Yet Sambamurthy managed to get the resolution passed with his persuasive eloquence.

Whenever differences of opinion arose between the congress leaders of East Godavari District Samba Murthy's compromise formula used to be unanimously accepted by them. When his only son died suddenly he was deeply engrossed in the programmes of the AICC conference in 1923. He was a real Maharshi and "Sthita Pragna" Dr. Brahma Josyula Subrahmanyam and Annapoornaiah were close to Sambamurthy. It was indeed a blessing to the movement. By 1928 Annapoornaiah became an elder member of the All India Congress Committee - At the national level Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose supported "Poorna Swaraj" In Andhra Dr. Subrahmanyam and Bulusu Sambamurthy stood by them, by championing the cause of Poorna Swaraj. While Bulusu Sambamurthy was the president of the Andhra wing of the Indian Independence League Dr. Subrahmanyam was the secretary. As member of the executive committee of the League Annapoornaiah travelled extensively in Andhra districts and popularised the programmes of the League in many ways. Even the "Congress" paper unequivocally declared that it was committed to the doctrine of "Poorna Swaraj"



## Goutami Satyagraha Ashram

Rajahmundry was an important centre for Alluminium business. In 1924 Seth Jamnalal, an ardent supporter of Congress, visited Rajahmundry. Although he came in connection with his business, he was highly impressed with the political movement in the place. He told Dr. Subrahmanyam that he would give a part of his income to those who do commendable service in the rural areas. With his financial support the Goutami Satyagraha Ashram was established in Sitanagaram in November 1924. Sitanagram was a river-side place near Rajahmundry at a distance of 13 miles from the town. Even in those days one could notice that there was considerable political awakening among the people of that area. A sizeable number of village officials of that area resigned from their jobs and joined the Congress movement. The Ashram was located in a site of 14 acres. Originally there were no houses near by. It was a typical Ashram by the side of the Godavari river. Because of the support and cooperation of the people of that area, by 1925, twelve houses came into existance - Within a year the drinking water facility was provided. The service programme conducted by the Ashram included promotion of khadi, free medical service, spread of Hindi education and the publication of the "Congress" paper. As we discussed earlier Madduri Annapoornaiah was its Chief Editor. Krovvidi Lingaraju and Ramachandruni Venkatappa were the Associate Editors. When these three were arrested, Chandrapatla Hanumanta Rao and Kandregula Ramachandra Rao worked as its editors. Its efficient staff included Madduri Krishna Moorty (Annapoornaiah's brother) and Vangala Satyanarayana who attended to the composing work of the press.

The inmates of the Ashram lived with their families. As an innovative measure, salary was paid to each of them according to his minimum needs. According to this arrangement Dr. Subrahmanyam drew Rs. 50/- Annapoornaiah Rs. 49/- and Lingaraju Rs. 35/-. This

is an experiment in socialism, successfully tried by the inmates and appreciated by all.

Gandhiji paid his first visit to the Ashram on 10th May 1929. When he saw the way in which its affairs were conducted, he was fully satisfied. He even praised it in his articles in "Young India". In December 1933 he visited the Ashram once again. When he came to know about the destruction caused by the police raid of 1932 he felt very sorry.

The Ashram suffered at the hands of the government in many ways. But the inmates remained brave and calm. and did their work with a sense of dedication. The government Published in the Madras Gazette in January 1932 that the Sitanagaram Ashram was illegal. On the 19th January 1932 a police superintendent raided the Ashram with four hundred Reserve constables. It was said that the Dy. Supdt. Mustafa Ali Khan behaved cruelly towards the inmates of the Ashram. After assembling all the inmates of the Ashram Khan addressed the inmates as follows:-

"The Ashram is declared by the government as an unlawful body. You are all required to disperse forthwith." To this Annapoornaiah answered in his stentorioun voice "The Ashram is our home. We live or die here only. Therefore we will not leave the place". The Police cane-charged the inmates and they were badly injured. Annapoornaiah, Dikshitulu, Krishnamurthy and Venkatappa sustained bleeding injuries on their heads. Krishna Murthy embraced his brother Annapoornaiah in an attempt to protect him. As such he received serious injuries and fell unconscious. He was admitted into the hospital from which he was discharged after two months treatment.

Without even looking at the badly bruised inmates Mustafa Alikhan personally supervised over the destruction of the properties of the Ashram. The Gautami Satyagraha - which played a special role for ten long years in the war of independence came to be closed by the end of 1933. The inmates left the Ashram one by one

and engaged themselves in different activities.

Along with his colleagues of the Ashram Annapoornaiah served imprisonment for 4 years in Cuddalore, Rajahmundry, Bellary, Vellore and Trichinopally jails from 1st February 1932 to February 1935. He had to serve an extra period of 10 months in the jail after all others were let off, as the jail authorities regarded him as a dangerous revolutionary.



# Father Of Socialist Movement In Andhra Pradesh

Jail life was a turning point in Madduri's life and proved to be an invaluable source of political education turning his mind towards socialist thought. His life in various jails brought him interesting experience through contact with socialist literature and the company of the great leaders. As he had an open mind he studied Socialism and Marxism and learnt many things about Soviet Russia. He happened to mix with a few Marxists who were his jail mates. The seeds of socialism were sown in his mind and they found a willing lodgement in it.

On 26th and 27th of September 1936; meetings connected with the second Annual Conference of Congress Socialist party were held in Rajahmundry. It is well known that there was a strong socialist lobby in the Indian National Congress. In those days Madduri and Putchalapalli Sundarayya were elected as Secretary and joint secretary of the conference in Rajahmundry.

Madduri became a close associate of Jaya Prakash Narayan in All India Congress meetings. Jaya Prakash Narayan was the secretary of All India Congress Socialist Party. When he toured Andhra region Madduri accompanied him. Along with him Madduri too conducted a vigorous campaign in favour of the movement against the abolition of the zamindari system and feudalism. They opposed the existing system of exploitation of the ryots by middle men and demanded proprietary rights for the farmer who actually tilled the land. In those days Jaya Prakash Narayan held strong views on socialism and the scrapping of the feudalistic land policy. He used to argue with Gandhiji and convince him. Ofcourse Gandhiji believed in the trusteeship concept - that owners of land and other types of property should not consider themselves as proprietors but as trustees. This idealistic concept was too good to be practically useful. The concept is fraught with difficulties because zamindars and capitalists cannot behave as Gandhiji wanted them to behave.

Essentially it is a class of exploiters and parasites on society. Gandhiji had great love and admiration for Jaya Prakash Narayan.

Annapoornaiah had great respect for Lenin who played a pivotal role in Russian Revolution. He called J.P as the Lenin of India. In one of his path-breaking books ""Why Socialism" Jaya Prakash Narayan expressed his views with vigour and clarity and pleaded for the abolition of the zamindari system and other forms of feudalism. Gandhiji himself praised Jayaprakash Narayan as "the only person in India who thoroughly studied and understood socialism and was capable of commenting on it".

Madduri got translated Jaya Prakash Narayan's book "Why Socialism" into Telugu under the title "Socialism Enduku" by Mahidhara Jaganmohan Rao, he himself writing a beautiful "Preface"

This book influenced many people. Tarimala Nagireddy, the veteran Communist leader who said that he was deeply influenced by "Socialism Enduku"

As the chief secretary of the Congress Socialist Party Annapoornaiah formulated and printed the rules and code of conduct for the members of the Socialist Party in March, 1937. The following are the salient points:

1. Only members of the Congress are eligible to be members of the congress socialist party.
2. Members should accept the doctrines of Karl Marx and study the science of class conflict and relevant duties.

The chief aims and objectives of the All India Congress Socialist Party are as follows:-

1. Administrative powers should be vested in the hands of the producers and the ordinary people.
2. The economic life of the country should be regulated and developed by the Government in a systematic manner.

3. The instruments of production, distribution etc., should be transferred to the society gradually and in a phased programme.
4. Cooperative credit societies should be started.
5. Transactions with foreign countries should be conducted by the Government.
6. States and Zamindaries should be abolished without any compensation.
7. Land should be distributed among the tillers of the soil.
8. Cooperative farming should be encouraged.
9. The debts of workers and farmers should be cancelled.
10. Right to work should be recognised or the government should accept the responsibility to look after the people.
11. 'work according to capacity and remuneration according to need' concept should be accepted.
12. Every one who attains the age of majority should have voting rights.
13. Government should be above caste, community etc.,
14. Public Debt of India need not be honoured.

In addition to these, the document contains 30 demands concerning political and agricultural matters.

Such were the enthusiasm, political convictions and economic theories of the great socialist leader of Andhra.

Annapoornaiah championed the cause of socialism with great earnestness and conviction and played a leading role in popularising the movement in Andhra. His commitment and courage impressed Jaya Prakash Narayan so much that he liked him immensely and regarded him as his trusted lieutenant.

Annapoornaiah shared some of the equalities of J.P. Their lives ran more or less on a similar pattern. Both of them were Gandhians in the initial stages and faithfully followed the Mahatma in prin-

ciples. Both of them possessed the skill of attracting the people. We may call it charisma. Subsequently they were drawn towards Marxism while continuing to participate in the national struggle for independence. Finally they turned spiritual.

In "Velugu" dated 27.4.1954, Annapoornaiah wrote ""In Poona J.P. fasted for 21 days in the summer of 1953 and afterwards there was a change in him from atheism to theism. The Socialist General Council which met in September 1953 in Bombay could not solve the problems of materialist nature. He said that he was not a Marxist and that there should be a close bond of love between man and man. J.P. took the right decision. The atheist was transformed into theist and took refuge in the doctrine of love which is the ultimate goal of all greatmen. My salutations to J.P." These comments made by Madduri on JP are equally applicable to himself. Thus Annapoornaiah was on the spiritual track. While practicing introspection and meditation and searching for a worthy "Guru" he came into the spiritual fold of Avatar Meher Baba. The political activist had become a spiritual seeker. There is nothing surprising about this transformation because we know how Aurobind Ghosh the revolutionary became Sri Aurobindo of Pondichery Ashram. Paul has become Saul.

### **Socialist Propoganda - Youth Training Camps at Kothapatnam and Mantenavari Palem**

We have seen how Jaya Prakash Narayan and other leaders started Socialist Party as a wing of the Congress with Gandhiji's blessings. Acharya Ranga was the president and Madduri was the secretary of the Andhra Province Congress Socialist Party. Madduri was a bold and popular leader. Whenever there was a critical stage in the movement, Acharya Ranga used to keep Madduri in the fore-front, because he was at once a stormy petrel and a smooth operator. There was a ban on the Communist Party. But communists being clever, infiltrated into the congress socialist party with the strategic view of strengthening their cadres and operating from within.

In May 1937 the Congress Socialist Party organised a training camp in Kothapatnam with the object of giving orientation to the

youth in the new political outlook and philosophy. Kothapatnam is conveniently located on the sea shore at a distance of 10 miles to the east of Ongole town. The camp consisted of 170 volunteers who were enlisted for orientation. They included Putchalapalli Sundarayya, Kolla Venkayya, Makineni Basava Punnaiah, Jonnalagadda Ramlingaiah, Pidatala Ranga Reddy, etc., All these persons became prominent leaders later.

The resource persons who delivered the lectures at the camp Indulal Yagnik, Zahir Hazara Begam, Swami Sahajananda Saraswati, Acharya Ranga, Jayaprakash Narayan, Achyut Patwardhan, Batliwala, C.P. Ellengo and other prominent men were known for their scholarly pursuits and political maturity.

Janab Ghose Beg was the head of the volunteer corps. Chandra Rajeshwar Rao (who later became a well known communist leader) was in charge of drill classes. Annapragada Kameswar Rao taught them gorilla war fare techniques. Alluri Satyanarayana Raju and Annapragada Kameswara Rao participated along with their wives.

The responsibility of running this training camp was shouldered by Annapragada Kameswara Rao, Madduri Anna poornaiah, Alluri Satyanarayana Raju, Neti Chalapati and Sagi Vijayarama Raju. As the camp was going on smoothly and successfully, on the basis of a report received from the Intelligence Department, the Government banned the training camp. Such arbitrary and high-handed measures were not uncommon in those days of British regime. Our own Indian officers of the Police who were more loyal than the king used to cooperate with the rulers and betray our countrymen without scruple and sentiment - In May 1937 Vellodi, Collector of Guntur district raided the camp with two vans of police men and lathi charged the inmates of the camp. Annapoornaiah, Annapragada and a few others received bruises.

In his lectures at the camp Annapoornaiah explained to the participants of the training camp the birth and objects of Indian National Congress. But in the chargesheet which was served on him they accused him of "preaching Communism in the camp". In his

rebuttal Annapoornaiah defended himself that he did not speak on communism. And the camp was banned after he finished his series of lectures.

In May 1938 Annapragada Kameswar Rao conducted another training camp at Mantenavari Palem (Guntur District). Strangely that training camp was not banned by the Government. Annapoornaiah delivered lectures on Indian National Congress and Socialism at this camp also. Resource persons/teachers at this camp included Annapoornaiah, Madabhushi Venkatachary, Chandra Rajeshwara Rao, C.V.K. Rao, Kambhampati Satyanarayana, P.V. Sivayya, Jonnalagadda Rama Lingaiah, S.A. Dange and P.C. Joshi and other. Prominent leaders visited the camp as observers.

Madala Veerabhadra Rao, veteran freedom fighter said that he was greatly influenced by Annapoornaiah's writings; eg.

"We are coolies, we are coolies

we are languishing without food and clothes

we built mansions and palaces

But we do not have even a hut to sit"-

-Coolie.

During 1937-38 Annapoornaiah travelled extensively in East and West Godavary districts delivering lectures on socialism. Several young men were attracted to him and joined the socialist party. He presided over the Tamilnadu Congress Socialist Conference at Battugundu. The west Godavari District Political Conference was conducted by Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya under Annapoornaiah's presidentship.

In reply to the charge - sheet served on him by the Government on 14.11.1942 Annapoornaiah who greatly admired Subhas Chandra Bose and championed the cause of Bose's Forward Bloc, stated as follows:- Forward Bloc is openly working for Sampoorna Swaraj (complete independence) of India by adopting peaceful and constructive and lawful methods. I am totally committed to it in

letter and spirit. I don't find any reason why I should dissociate from it". Before his disappearance Bose gave a statement that Forward Bloc gave full support to Gandhiji's Individual Satyagraha (Although its scope was limited)

Mukundal Sarkar, of All India Forward Bloc while rebutting the charges levelled against Bose, said that the object of their party was to oppose the invasion of India by any foreign power. Subsequently some members of the Forward Bloc joined the Bengal Ministry. It was for this reason that Government did not declare the Forward Bloc as an unlawful Body.

In 1940 when Annapoornaiah was speaking at a public meeting in Rajahmundry explaining the ideology of the Forward Bloc, he was taken as a detenu. He rendered valuable service to the cause of Independence as president of Alluminium workers and press workers unions. Mobilising the workers and motivating them, he made substantial contribution to the welfare of the workers.



## Andhra Netaji

Annapoornaiah earned the title of "Andhra Netaji" affectionately conferred upon him by his admirers.

The Calcutta Congress was held in December 1928 under the Presidentship of Motilal Nehru. Annapoornaiah attended the conference as a member of the All India Congress. Subhas Chandra Bose was the President of the Youth Congress Conference which was held there. He was also the leader of the volunteer corps of the conference. It was in this connection that Annapoornaiah came into contact with Bose for the first time. He struck an instant rapport with him. He developed great admiration and esteem for Bose's dynamism and leadership qualities.

Annapoornaiah got the impression that Gandhiji's attitude towards Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose was not based on justice and impartiality, and that he was partial towards Nehru who was his blue-eyed boy. It is common knowledge that Gandhiji had his preferences and aversions - likes and dislikes. Every one knows that he was prejudiced against Tanguturi Prakasam because of Rajagopala Chary's influence over himself. Even Andhra Ratna Duggirala Gopala Krishnaiah once commented "I thought Gandhiji was a "Purushottama" but found him to be only "Uttama Purusha" After all even Mahatmas are human beings.

There was a contest between Subhaschandra Bose and Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya for the presidentship of Indian National Congress. Pattabhi was Gandhiji's sponsored candidate specially set up by him to oppose Bose. When Pattabhi was defeated Gandhiji said "Pattabhi's defeat is my defeat". In that election Annapoornaiah voted for Bose as a matter of principle without yielding to regional and parochial feelings.

Subhas Chandra Bose appointed Annapoornaiah as President of the Forward Bloc of Andhra Province.

The 53rd All India Congress Committee met in Ramgarh (Bihar) in 1940 under the Presidentship of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. The kisan meetings of Forward Bloc were concurrently held at a place called Kisan nagar. A large number of kisans attended the meeting. When the president in the midst of a stirring address put forth his proposal for confrontation and asked the audience whether they were ready for a fight with the Government, thousands of people raised their hands. This meeting which was held proposing fight with the imperialists came to be known as Anti-compromise Congress. A resolution was unanimously passed empowering the President to constitute an action committee at All India level. It was resolved that the struggle should not start in April and there should be any let - up in its intensity or side tracking when once it was started. It was also decided that local issues should be brought to the forefront and used as ammunition to fight the imperialists. Subhas Chandra Bose appointed Annapoornaiah as a member of the Action Committee.

It will be interesting to know in what circumstances Subhas Chandra Bose left the Congress and started his Forward Block Party. The second world war broke out on 3rd September 1939 causing commotion among our people. Students in particular reacted to it sensitively and worked themselves into an emotional state. On the same day Bose paid a visit to Rajahmundry and addressed a memorable meeting.

When Bose was elected as Congress President at Tripura in March 1939, there was discontent among higher echelons of Congress leadership, particularly among moderates who looked upon Bose as an uncompromising radical. They created a crisis which led to the resignation of Bose. They passed an order prohibiting Bose to hold any position of responsibility for a period of three years. Disgusted with Congress leadership Bose started Forward Block which attracted all spirited young-men and ardent patriots.

As President of the Forward Block, Bose undertook a tour of the southern provinces. The Congress high command issued a circular to all the southern provinces advising them not to extend any welcome or cooperation to him. In spite of the prohibitive circular, Annapoornaiah arranged a hearty welcome and grand reception to Bose. In Tamil Nadu Muthu Ramalinga Naicker took initiative in arranging a similar reception to Bose. Bose delivered a memorable speech in the mammoth meeting arranged in Rajahmundry. The speech was translated into Telugu by Annapoornaiah with vigour and fidelity. Annapoornaiah also delivered a stirring speech which was highly appreciated by the audience - They hailed him as "Andhra Netaji". Since then this title struck to him.



## The Four Men Of The Epoch

Official history prepared by the Congress government may not accept it, but India's independence is the result of four important factors:

- (a) Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak's clarion call for Independence. It was the starting point.
- (b) Mahatma Gandhiji's Satyagraha Movement.
- (c) Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's Azad Hind Fouz, and
- (d) Jayaprakash's August Revolution.

The last two are like twins. The former operated out side the borders of India and the latter worked from inside. A part from high - profile leaders whose names frequently figured in the media, the common man made a substantial contribution to the freedom movement. While some people enjoyed the fruits of freedom, thousands of people languished in poverty and remained in obscurity.

In Annapoornaiah's opinion, there are four epoch making men who made sterling contribution to the freedom and cultural development of the country. They are Tilak, Gandhiji, Netaji and Jayaprakash. He looked upon Tilak as his Guru, although he had no personal contact with him. With the other three he moved closely and maintained cordial and personal relations.

A public meeting was held in Calcutta on 12-6-1953 when the Forward Block merged with Praja Socialist Party. Annapoornaiah played an active role. Jaya Prakash Narayan delivered a speech in which he said: ""Mahatma Gandhi and Netaji who made greater contribution to the war of independence than any body else, are not with us today. It is highly regrettable that they are not available in our midst to lead us in the construction of New India - Gandhiji's Sarvodaya tradition, Netaji's nationalist tradition and democratic socialist tradition have now merged together. A mighty force will emerge from this unprecedented and auspicious combination. What ever their outward names, there is a laudable objective, a goal be-

hind these three traditions. There is one and only ideology. Because we have understood these forces, we have achieved grand unity. There is no exaggeration if I say that this unity is a great opportunity for our country".

Although people played a key role in winning independence, it was Bal Gangadhar Tilak who created awareness among the people with his slogan ""freedom is my birth right. I wont rest till I achieve it." There is no patriot greater than Tilak whose life was an example to the future generations of freedom fighters. Even in the Jail he wrote a scholarly commentary on Bhagavad Geeta which still remains as a source of inspiration to the people.

Then came Gandhi from South Africa where he made experiments, in non-violence which he moulded to suit political exigencies and fabricated a formidable instrument with which he fought the British imperialism and eventually wrested independence from them. He was a supreme leader who produced great leaders under his tutelage.

Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose made a notable contribution to the freedom movement by putting together a national army known as Azad Hind Fauz which demonstrated the strength and valour of the Indian patriots who operated outside the geographical boundaries of the country. He commanded respect from Hitler, Mussolini and Tojo without compromising our national interests.

Jayaprakash was a dedicated socialist whose personal integrity and idealism cemented the disparate elements of nationalism and forged unity among them. His revolutionary zeal was an important factor in bringing democratic ideas to the fore. J.P. said "As I diagnose the root cause of the country's critical state of health. I identity it unhesitatingly as corruption and precipitous fall in the moral standards of our politics and public life."

The history of India is incomplete without giving a prominent place to the constructive role played by these four greatmen of India.



## Annapoornaiah And Venkata Ramanamma

Annapoornaiah and Venkata Ramanamma are inseperable couple. Rarely we find husband and wife working closely for social welfare and political freedom. Venkataramanamma was his partner and co-sharer of life. Born in 1906 at Peddapuram. she married Annapoornaiah in 1919 when he was a student. She helped her husband by participating in socially useful programmes as well as activities. Although their's was an arranged marriage, in a way it was a love marriage because they had to over come initial hurdles caused by their parents. Annapoornaiah paid a rich tribute to her in his song "Veera Patni" (valiant wife).

When her husband took the reckless step of discontinuing his studies all of a sudden in response to the call from the political leaders, she took a pragmatic view and wrote a letter reminding her husband of the difficulties they had to face on account of family circumstances and poverty, and advised him not to act in haste. She however did not discourage him. She was not less patriotic. She only pleaded for postponement but not cancellation. Disregarding her advice he plunged head - long in to the vortex of the political struggle. In this matter it is difficult to decide who was right and who was wrong. There was a strong opinion among some of the leaders that those who enter public life without economic independence would run into slander and scandals.

The Annapoornaiah couple joined the Sitanagaram Goutami Satyagraha camp in 1925 and played an active part in its constructive activities. In 1927 they were blessed with a daughter whom they named Rajeswari.

When Sitanagaram camp was declared unlawful and the police were about to raid it, all women were asked to go out and seek safety. But Ramanamma declined to leave the Ashram saying "We, women will remain here and face the consequences along with our

men. We are not afraid of death." However the elders persuaded the women to leave the place.

The "Jai Bharat" paper gives a detailed account of the gruesome tragedy when the men were mercilessly beaten up and property was destroyed by the police.

When her husband was arrested, Ramanamma had a strong desire to go to prison along with him. She did picketing before the shops in the market against the sale of foreign cloth and got arrested. She was sentenced to six months imprisonment. She did with courage and patriotism what men were afraid of doing. In 1932 she served the jail sentence in the Cannanore Jail. This fact was confirmed by Suryadevara Rajyalakshmi; another prominent freedom fighter who happened to be her jail mate - In October 1934 she was one of the members of the party which sold Khadi openly in Rajahmundry in connection with Gandhi Jayanti. In 1935 the Annapoornaiah couple left Sitanagaram Ashram. On 10.4.1937 they were blessed with a son whom they christened Jayaram.

In 1935 Ramanamma fell critically ill. Annapoornaiah had to shoulder the responsibility of conducting the activities connected with the Golden Jubilee of the Congress. She asked him not to worry about her state of health but attend to his public work which was sacred. Thus she placed the interests of the country before her personal health.

When Annapoornaiah was imprisoned as a detenu in April 1940 by British Government, his daughter was 13 years old and his son was an infant of 3 years. By that time he had no paternal property to fall back upon. Poverty did not stand in the way of his public work and active participation in the freedom movement. Before he was released from the Jail in June 1945 his beloved wife passed away.

God alone knows how she maintained the family and looked after the children when her husband suffered long incarceration in Jails. Relatives on her mother's side helped her to some extent friends and admirers of her husband also gave some assistance.

She never wrote discouraging letters to her husband who was in the Vellore Jail for a long time. On the other hand her occasional letters conveying welfare used to console him a little. She could not write frequently because she could not afford to buy a post card. She used to write a card without mentioning the date and requested him to put on it the date on which he was expecting a letter from her. What a pathetic situation! When Madduri showed the letter to his fellow detainees their eyes became moist. This is a heart rendering example of the distress and deprivations of some of the freedom fighters of those days.

In 1942 at the instance of her well - wishers Ramanamma submitted a petition to the government asking them to release her husband unconditionally or in lieu of it sanction maintenance allowance to the family. The Government sanctioned a paltry amount of Rs. 15/- per month. Subsequently she sent another application in which she explained with convincing reasons how it was next to impossible to make both ends meet with such a paltry amount - when the head of the family was in jail for a long period. She also mentioned the facts of spiralling prices and her daughter whose marriage was due to be celebrated. Every one who read this letter was touched. But this petition fell on deaf ears. At long last in July 1942 the allowance was raised to Rs. 25/-.

As it was difficult to get on with that meagre income, she shifted her residence to Eluru, where she could count on the support of her brothers. Moreover security reasons required male assistance.

In 1942 Annapoornai applied for parole of 15 days or a grant of Rs. 200/- to enable him to perform his daughter's marriage. But the hard hearted Government turned down his request. The marriage of his daughter Rajeswari was performed when he was in the jail. It was a simple and unostentatious ceremony. The bride groom was Suryanarayana, Ramanamma's brother. The expenditure for the wedding was only Rs. 512/-. She had to borrow Rs. 200/-.

Annapoornaiah was in "Damo" Jail in Madhya Pradesh when his wife died in 1943. In her last moments she wrote letter to her husband expressing her desire to see him before she breathed her last. Annapoornaiah sent a petition to Madras Government through the jail authorities of Madhya Pradesh. By the time the wheels of bureaucracy moved, he received a telegram announcing her death!

The telegram was received by Annapoornaiah's jail mate and intimate friend Krovvidi Lingaraju - Unable to convey the sad and heart-breaking news Lingaraju stood in tears. Sensing the tragedy, Annapoornaiah asked him whether the telegram was about his wife's death. Taking the telegram from his friend's hands, Annapoornaiah read it and went into the corner of the room dumb-founded. It was deafening silence. Words come only when the heart is light. When the heart is full words are few or nil

Smt. Ramanama's portrait was unveiled by Chunduri Venkataramanamma in Kovvur on the Independence Day August 15, 1947. After her demise Annapoornaiah was like a man from whose day light had departed. Yet the will to serve the country made him live on.



## As Detenue Nagar Mayor

For fourteen long years Annapoornaiah was in jails. Perhaps none else in the south had served such a longer term. In 1940 when he delivered a speech in a public meeting in Rajahmundry explaining the aims and objects of the Forward Block, he was taken by the police into custody. Straight away he was taken to Godavari Railway station and put in the Calcutta - Madras mail. When his wife and children went to the station with a bag containing a pair of clothes for him they were not allowed to go near him. When his brother-in-law Kolluru Krishna Sastry implored the officer that he had to discuss certain urgent matters of domestic nature, he was grudgingly permitted to travel up to Vijayawada.

In the jail all his fellow detenues elected Annapoornaiah as Detention nagar Mayor. As mayor he used to comfort and console whoever came into the jail and tried his best to look after their welfare.

In October 1947 Annapoornaiah published in "Jaya Bharat" an article "Hussain the unknown Hero". He wrote it humorously under the pen-name AmritaRao, "The mayor of detenues is not an ordinary man. Jail authorities had to deal with the detenues through the mayor but not directly. When I was mayor, my orderly, 20 year old Hussain's duties were to pass on the letters written by the detenues to the office and give the letters which came to the detenues to the Mayor. He had another funny duty of eating the fruits belonging to the Mayor. As he was the warder's son he was acting as a spy against the detenues. But I somehow managed to win him over to my side and used him as a spy against the authorities themselves. One day the superintendent unexpectedly came to the Mayor walking very fast. At that time young Hussain was busy eating the fruits in the Mayor's room. I came out of the room to prevent the superintendent from seeing the orderly in a compromising position. Thus Hussain was saved by my timely strategy. For this act of kindness Hussain prostrated before the Mayor (myself) in gratitude."

The Jail superintendent's visit was to hand over the letter written by Subash Chandra Bose to Annapoornaiah. Out of curiosity Hussain enquired from the Mayor about Subash Chandra Bose whom he did not know. The Mayor took the opportunity to explain the story of Bose to Hussain every day. Only three days ago Bose disappeared from the prison. In that letter written to the Mayor, Bose gave a hint that he might not be able to write to him in future. Hussain informed the Mayor and became a follower of Bose. The disappearance of the orderly made a sensation in the jail. Hussain's father guessed that the cause of his son's disappearance was the Mayor who might have brain-washed him.

The boy's birthday had come. His father was assigned the duty of handling six war prisoners. He hoped that he would get Rs.30/- with which he could celebrate his son's birthday in a grand manner. According to his duties he pulled the hanging wire without looking at the faces of the prisoners. We could imagine his shock when he found that one of them was his own son. He cried "My dear son" and fainted. As destiny would have it he was the executioner to his own beloved son!

Jail life had its own amusing experiences for the Prisoners. This tragi-comic incident about the boy Hussain was described by Annapoornaiah in an interesting manner, without light-heartedly distorting facts. He never blew his own trumpet and projected his image in a vain-glorious manner. We find an admixture of humour and pathos in the description.

## Petition Falls On Deaf Ears

Annapoornaiah repeatedly requested the government to give the reasons for the detention of himself and his fellow detenues. He demanded that they should be unconditionally released and tried in a court of law. He insisted that at least a judicial tribunal should be setup to enable them to represent their case through a lawyer. In response to his representations. Government appointed a judge in December 1941, but refused permission to engage a lawyer. The detenues applied for reconsideration of the order. On January 3rd,

1942 Rutherford the notorious Adviser to the Governor came to visit the Vellore Jail. Annapoornaiah submitted his plea personally to him. It was in vain. Permission was denied to get the defence statement drafted by a lawyer. At that time Batchu Jagannadh Das, Advocate (Who later became Supreme Court Judge) came to see Annapoornaiah. The authorities did not permit Annapoornaiah to consult him legally.

Acharya Ranga was then a member of the central legislative council. He sent a telegram to Gandhiji to intervene in the matter and advise, But the authorities managed that the telegram did not reach Gandhiji. There was no use. Even Ranga himself met Rutherford without success.

In these days Vavilala Gopala Krishnaiah was a detenu in the Vellore jail along with Annapoornaiah. In April 1941 a hundred detenues fasted for 19 days. in connection with their demand for just and reasonable categorization of prisioners. As Vavilala was very young, he fainted on the 14th day of the fast and his condition caused anxiety. Annapoornaiah and others persuaded him to give up the fast. They told him "We are fasting to oppose the authorities but not to die" Today Padmabhushan Vavilala Gopala Krishnaiah is a respected freedom fighter and revolutionary campaigner for social reform. He is 91 years young!



## Concern For Students And Youth

From the beginning Annapoornaiah had faith in the power and potential of the students and the youth. He knew that India had well-meaning and patriotic youth who were always prepared to work for a good cause and participate in the movements of freedom and social reform. All that they needed was worthy leaders who could set an example to them and instill discipline and idealism in them. He believed that the parents and the teachers had an important role to play. He had seen ideal teachers like Sri Raghupati Venkataratnam, Principal of Pithapur Rajah's College who inspired the students with his lectures and made them take up constructive cultural and social activities.

In Rajahmundry he had seen Pandit Kandukuri Veeresalingam, a social reformer, a man of letters, preacher of ethical values. He enthused and exhorted the students and used their services for social reforms such as widow marriages, abolition of child marriages, encouragement of inter-caste marriages and a relentless campaign for rooting out corruption and forgery.

Annapoornaiah believed that the future of India lies in the hands of the youth and it was the duty of the elders to mould and direct them on the right lines.

Let us see the following excerpts from Annapoornaiah's editorial of "Velugu" dated 30-3-1954.

"If Kandukuri Veeresalingam was able to conduct his crusade in favour of widow marriages, it was because he had the support and unstinted co-operation of Telugu students. They rescued him from stones pelted at him by the superstitious and orthodox people. It was the Telugu student who helped him in fighting against the demon of casteism by performing inter-caste marriages".

"Amarajeevi Potti Sreeramulu achieved the separate state for Andhras by relying on the support of the Telugu students. He sacrificed his own life to realise this objective. It was the Telugu student who stopped the trains, fought with the police, defied tear gas shells,

faced the bullets and brought the Government to a stand still ! It was he who was mainly responsible for the formation of the separate Andhra State. It was the Telugu student who did service to the flood-affected people who lost all their belongings and became shelterless".

"Telugu Youth is the Telugu student's brother in all respects. The student and the youth should come forward by getting rid of their bad habits and making themselves free from superstitions".

Annapoornaiah made the following speech in Kakinada addressing the Brotherhood League on January, 29th. "In all the countries of the world students and the youth sacrificed their studies and lives and stood in the vanguard of any movement. Read the history of India ! What they teach you in your schools and colleges are cock and bull stories. If you read the 40 years history of the Congress, you will know that many patriots laid down their lives for the freedom of the country. Do you know how many heroes sacrificed themselves and without our knowledge how many are languishing in Andaman jails and how many are suffering in foreign countries."

"Try to remember the war of freedom of 1857. Jhansi Lakshmi Bai rode on her horse tying her six year old child to the seat and fought valiantly and defeated the British soldiers and General Jatkar"

"You must know what happened very recently. 25 years old youngman Alluri Sita Rama Raju shook the British Government for three years - British government which defeated laiser of Germany. Please note that he is a student of our Kakinada college. Therefore youth are the lifeline of a country. You, youngmen and young women don't forget this secret.



## Intrepid Journalist And Forceful Writer

In those pre-independence days prominent political leaders cultivated the skills of public speaking and journalism. They realised the importance of communicating with the people - intellectuals and the masses through the written word as well as the spoken word. Communication was the key to leadership and the lifeline of an organization.

We have seen how Annapoornaiah edited the "Congress" paper in Sitanagaram Ashram and utilised it as a sharp sword to attack the British Government with his forceful editorials and fight for Sampoorna Swaraj, as distinguished from the Dominion status. Its unprecedented record was that all its editors including Annapoornaiah were arrested and sentenced to imprisonment for their "Seditious" writings. They were dauntless freedom fighters.

Rajahmundry was not only a seat of literature and culture but soon became the centre of Journalism in the yet undivided Godavari district. Freedom movement produced a large number of Telugu Journals - "Andhra Vani" "Simhapuri", Swatantra" "Pinakini Patrika" "Matruseva" and Congresss. Of these "Congress" was the sole survivor.

In 1922 the British Government ordered that "Congress" "Krishna Patrika" "Andhra Patrika" and "Swadharma Patrika" should not be given advertisements.

The "Congress paper" gave a boost to Independence Movement by publishing lives of Tantia Thop, Bahadur Shah, Jhansi Lakshmi Bai, Ram Kumar Sinha, Nana Saheb and Mangal Pande in the issues from 1926 to 1929. All the staff of the paper including the editor and composer were sitting on the floor. Gandhiji was so impressed with this simple life that he wanted to tell the Editor of "Navajivan" to follow this example.

## Navasakti

At one time Annapoornaiah's ancestors were very rich. But when he grew up, he had only two acres of land. By selling this land he started the weekly Nava Sakti in Rajahmundry. He decided to leave Sitanagaram Ashram when tongues wagged and society gossiped. He sensed a whispering campaign against him. On 7-7-35 he shifted his residence to Rajahmundry and started this paper.

The purpose of starting this paper was to galvanize the people into activity when they were leading a passive; humdrum life. He wanted to instil patriotism in them and make them agents of social reform and political change. In the beginning, he signed a declaration for the paper accepting sole responsibility for running it. The first issue of 'Navasakti' was launched on 15-12-1937 with a photo of Karl Marx on the title page. It contained a slogan "Workers and farmers unite". It had the blessings of Pandit Nehru and Jayaprakash Narayan.

Annapoornaiah explained the principal objective of the paper in the following words "This paper accepts the Socialist system. It strengthens the Congress freedom struggle and assists in tearing the doctrine of imperialism to shreds". Although the paper started on his own responsibility, in course of time it became an official organ of the Congress Socialist Party.

As there was a ban on Communists in those days. Putchalapalli Sundarayya and others joined and remained in the Congress Socialist Party. Maddukuri Chandra Sekhar Rao, Tummala Venkatramaiah were on the editorial board. By the end of 1938 the membership increased considerably. Since all the members except Annapoornaiah were communists the paper became an out and out communist paper.

## Jai Bharat

Jai Bharat was started in Rajahmundry by Annapoornaiah on 15-8-1947. Independence Day. From November 1947 he declared it as a Socialist weekly in Telugu. Yerramilly Narasimha Rao

other Scholar with Socialist views was the Associate Editor. Annapoornaiah used to write not only editorials but also comments and criticism under the pen-name "Amrutha Rao". It had a variety of features including a short story; a poem and popular opinion. Some times the paper published the photos of prominent patriots on the title pages and profiles of those greatmen. On 28-8-1947 it came out with the photo of "Andhra Kesari" Tanguturi Prakasam. Writing about him Annapoornaiah made the following comment "Andhras do not agree on any single issue. They express divergent opinions. But they are unanimous in adoring Prakasam. What is his speciality ? Courage, valour and sacrifice are his natural element. It does not mean that there are no men with such good qualities among Andhras. He makes his appearance where ever there is danger - when cyclone renders people homeless and causes colossal destruction, Prakasam must be there on the spot".

In the issue of 1-10-47 Jai Bharat published the photo of Patwardhan and wrote about him as follows :- "He is a well-known socialist leader. He was for some time the general secretary of the socialist party. He resigned his professorship in a university and joined politics.

He was a member of the A.I.C.C. in Lucknow and Faizapur but declined to continue in that capacity. In 1942 movement he led the August revolution in partnership with Aruna Asaf Ali. It was his dedication and resolute will that were responsible for the establishment of Swadeshi Government in the place of British Government in Satara (Maharastra). His brother Rao Saheb Patwardhan stood by his side in his activities. The Patwardhan family was very famous and dynamic in Maharastra !

In the issue of 8-10-1947 he published the photo and life history of Ram Monohar Lohia. He is an outstanding name among socialist leaders. He is an intellectual. He made himself prominent as the International Secretary of the A.I.C.C. He was a prominent member of the national executive of the Socialist Party. He was one of

the leaders who led the 1942 Revolution successfully. He was imprisoned in the jail in Red Fort along with Jaya Prakash Narayan.

Kamala Devi Chattopadhyaya's photo was published in the *Jai Bharat* of 18-12-1948. He wrote "One of the illustrious women of India, Kamala Devi was the former president of All India Women's Council. She distinguished her self as first-class poet and spell-binding orator. Till recently she was a member of the A.I.C.C. Besides she is a Socialist leader and a member of the Executive of the Socialist Party. She renders valuable service to the cause of Socialism"

The issue of 1-10-1947 had paid a tribute to the revolutionary outlook of the Maharaja of Vijayanagaram "In one of his statements he advocated the introduction of a Bill to nationalize the land of the whole country so that all the land comes under state control with the elimination of all old practices and traditions. The Zamindaris which are associated with the imperialists should be abolished as soon as possible. When Annapoornaiah requested him to give a donation to Jaya Prakash Narayan for Party Fund, he readily obliged and gave a purse of Rs. 10,000/-. It was not surprising. The Editor congratulated him for setting an example to all the zamindars and the moneyed classes.

Thus among other things "Jai Bharat" contains Profiles and brief Pen-Portraits of distinguished Socialist leaders who commanded respect and exercised whole some influence on their contemporaries.

### 'VELUGU'-A WEEKLY

We do not know why Annapoornaiah discontinued 'Jai Bharat'. On 10-7-1953 (date fixed by Mehar Baba) Annapoornaiah started "VELUGU" a Weekly in Rajahmundry with the declared objective of promoting truth and values which are conspicuous by their absence in the existing papers. "Exaggeration, ostentation and sensationalism are the bane of most of the papers. Truth and love have become a casualty. They were keeping them selves aloof from the

political situation in the country. Corruption has become a regular evil in society. There is an urgent need to awaken the people to realise the importance of working for independence. People need "Mukti" (Self Realisation) along with "Bhukti" (Food). "Velugu" which means light, is intended to satisfy these two needs by establishing democratic socialism. The paper provides livelihood to the poor. By advising the people to introspect and look into these souls it helps them to realise God. We hope that "VELUGU" will kindle a bright flame in the hearts of the Telugu people and strive for their spiritual advancement" Obviously the Editor's attention is shifted from material values to the spiritual goal.

Jaya Prakash Narayan sent the following message :

"The name of the paper is 'light' which dispels darkness. The time of its launching is the auspicious occasion of the emergence of New Andhra. The content of the paper is democratic socialism which helps the suffering and exploited mankind. The man who runs the paper is my old friend who is mature and experienced."

Andhra Kesari's message is as follows :- "Annapoornaiah's mature pen is known to the Andhra world. He is an expert in running papers. I hope his writings which enthuse the youth and make them dynamic and motivate them to participate in the war of Independence, will now make a substantial contribution to the New Andhra. I wish all the best to the paper."

Annapoornaiah wrote about Ashok Mehta in "VELUGU" and paid him a glowing tribute. "He is one of the architects of Socialism. He is responsible for the starting of Hind Mazdoor Sabha which has extended its support to workers and toilers. He is an orator, scholar and constructive worker. We rarely find all three sterling qualities in a single person. Besides he is unequalled in his capacity to lead people. He is managing the workers in Bombay and farmers in Pandhi (Gujarat) in an admirable manner. He is the General Secretary of the Praja Socialist Party. He is standing for the Parliament from Madhya Pradesh. I shall be glad if the Parliament gets the

good fortune of having such a genius as member. Today's Dandi Satyagraha is like Bardoli Satyagraha which was led by Sardar Vallabhai Patel. He is the youngest of the leaders, author of All India stature. Above all he is a patriot, scholar, friend of workers and leader of farmers, and author of many books. He is a great leader with positive thinking and an unblemished service. On this auspicious occasion of his 42nd birthday. I express my admiration for him".

As Annapoornaiah changed his papers and finally started 'VELUGU', we notice the evolution of his political views - from Congress to Marxism (milk and water communism) from Marxism to socialism and modified socialism of the Forward Block and finally spiritualism under the influence of Avatar Mehar Baba. But what ever the 'ism' that he adopted, he remained to the end a journalist of courage, truth and selfless patriotism. There were no mercenary bones in his body. To the end he maintained the highest standards of Journalism.

'VELUGU' shows his spiritual transformation. He provided a page in the weekly for Mehar Baba's message. This was not liked by his socialist friends. But he persisted in doing it.



## Exit From Politics

After 33 years of selfless service to the country in politics Annapoornaiah came under the spiritual influence of Avatar Mehar Baba and left the political scene : He entered politics on 2-12-1920 and left it on 2-12-1953 with a clean and unblemished record of self less service to the country for three decades. He became disillusioned with politics and material values. He realized that by remaining in politics he cannot reform the society and transform the people - He wrote "The main reason for the collapse of moral values in society is degeneration and corruption in politics." Morality has never been a ground rule in politics. We can never judge a politician by the absolute standards of ethics.

"As long as Mahatma Gandhi was alive ethical values were very high in politics because he gave utmost importance to morality and spiritual outlook. After him spiritual values have vanished. As an inevitable consequence the moral standard of public workers has declined. When once the politician has fallen low in his moral conduct it is immaterial to which party he belongs. His personal depravity affects the party itself. It eats into the vitals of the body politic like Cancer".

In this context "Jana Vakyam" a paper of Kakinada commented on 12-12-1953 as follows.

"When Annapoornaiah was released from jail in 1931 Bulusu Samba Murthi arranged a felicitation function for him in Kakinada. He hob nobbed with the communists. He showed leanings towards the so-called progressive politics and leftist ideology. But communists did not relish his leadership. They took over his "Navasakti" and politely dismissed him. He is an intimate friend of Subash Chandra Bose. He actually led his Forward Bloc in Andhra. With the disappearance of Bose from the Jail, he tendered his resignation to that party. While remaining in the socialist party, he made propaganda for Communism. The Socialist party declined because it had fallen into the hands of opportunists, and turn-coats. Finally Annapoornaiah decided to remain aloof from all political parties on 2-

12-1953 and started "VELUGU" Had he taken this decision earlier, he would have done great service not only to Andhra, but to the whole country as an intellectual with many talents, with his unlimited patience, organising capacity, keen intellect and practical abilities. No small party can contain and absorb him. His leadership will be felt as a great burden by these parties".

"Zamin Ryot" a weekly of Nellore wrote about him on 11-2-1953 as follows :- "Madduri Annapoornaiah took political Sanyasa. He decided to spend the rest of his life in spiritual thought. The reason behind his drastic decision is the volatile nature of politics in Andhra with its ambiguities and uncertainties. Our Andhra politics had taken so low that many people like Annapoornaiah will prefer to quit the political scene."

These two contemporary papers had given an accurate and unbiased assessment of the circumstances that prompted Annapoornaiah to quit politics and seek solace in spiritual life.

In fact Annapoornaiah was disappointed with the Government of India and the government of Andhra . He did not like even Jawaharlal's style of functioning and certain decisions. Even socialism lost its lustre. He was fully convinced that spiritual outlook was necessary for right decision and good conduct. Values like love, truth and justice are essential for Government and political organizations. He looked to Meher Baba for guidance. On 2-12-1953 he received a telegram.

### "My Blessings"

**-Baba**

He at once took his decision to quit politics. It is gratifying to know that Annapoornaiah Centenary Celebrations were conducted in a befitting manner in Hyderabad, an award for Journalism was constituted and efforts are afoot to get a postal stamp released in his memory. In fact it is not necessary to erect a statue or unveil an oil painting or open a building to perpetuate his memory, since he is enthroned in the hearts of the people.



## EPILOGUE

Annapoornaiah was in close touch with the activities and Conferences of Andhra Maha Sabha with the objective of forming Andhra Province Since 1928 onwards. He was keenly interested in achieving a separate state for Andhra. In the Meerut Congress of 1946 this matter came up for discussion. They all thought that the province would come into existence along with the new constitution. Kala Venkat Rao who convened a meeting specifically for the purpose could not get sufficient support. However Annapoornaiah could get the signatures of the top socialist leaders like Jaya Prakash Narayan and Ram Manohar Lohia. Acharaya Kripalani the then Congress President did not allow discussion on this issue on the plea that it does not concern the national movement. At long last Andhra Province came into existence in 1953 with Potti Sreeramulu's fast unto death and martyrdom. There were different opinions about the location of the capital. After protracted discussions they selected Kurnool as temporary capital. In this connection, Annapoornaiah played an important role by bringing to the notice of the leaders the Sri Bagh Pact which was concluded on 17th November, 1937. He has successfully countered the arguments of the communist leaders and championed the cause of the formation of "Visalandhra" with Hyderabad as its Capital.

Although he was defeated in 1952 elections when an young communist candidate Chittoori Prabhakar Choudary was elected he reacted in a sporting manner. He had declared that the main purpose was to serve the country to the best of his ability following the example of Bhagat Singh and Chandra Sekhar Azad who laid down their lives for the country - He also admired the sacrifice of Vinayak Damodar Savarkar.

One of the high lights of his later life was the mammoth meeting held in Rajahmundry following the martyrdom of Potti Sree Ramulu. He addressed the meeting on 17-12-1952 standing upon the rail

engine, in the Godavari Railway Station, His speech was appeal, to the masses not to take law into their hands. It prevented a great catastrophe.

As General Secretary of the Socialist Party Annapoornaiah worked very hard and achieved spectacular results for the cause of the Party. He was against the merger of the Socialist Party and the Praja Party although he accepted the decision of the elders. His interest declined in the Party. We have seen how he turned spiritual, became the follower of Meher Baba and started "VELUGU" on Meher Baba's birthday. He did a lot to spread the message of Meher Baba in Andhra. Meher Baba toured Andhra districts, for 11 days from 20th February, 1954. Annapoornaiah received him at Vijayawada station, accompanied him on his tour and bade him fare well at Kakinada. In connection with the "SHASTI POORTH" of Baba he brought out a special number of 'VELUGU' to mark the occasion. He even composed poems in English and offered them to Baba - Baba blessed all the members of his family. Besides he gave a special interview to Annapoornaiah - In the summer of 1951, Annapoornaiah's health declined. He had a sun stroke. After his wife's demise, he lived all along at Rajahmundry. while his son Jayaram was studying in his uncle's house.

A hotel Proprietor who admired his sacrifice and sympathised with his present position used to supply food to him. In September 1954 he went to Eluru and died there on 11th September after a brief illness.

Thus ended the life of one of the noblest and the greatest of the patriots of our country whose life was a saga of suffering and ordeals. When comes such another?



## 'Values of Freedom movement important now'

True Gandhian spirit and the dedicated values of the freedom movement as also the Socialist movement have to be rekindled for the country to get out of the present morass and progress, said former Union Minister and veteran Socialist leader, Prof. Madhu Dandavate.

Speaking at the birth centenary celebrations of freedom fighter and journalist, Madduri Annapoornaiah here on Sunday. Prof. Dandavate said the values propagated by the freedom and Socialist movements were important to this day. "But, these days values have been lost in the national agenda and leaders are dedicated to power," he said.

Earlier, the Minister for Tourism, Mr. T. Sitaram, announced that the State government had decided to constitute a Lifetime Achievement Award for journalists in the name of Madduri Annapoornaiah. A communication was also sent to the Centre to bring out a special stamp in his honour.

Paying rich tributes. Prof. Dandavate said, Madduri Annapoornaiah had made "invaluable contribution to the freedom struggle and Socialist movement". Annapoornaiah had spent 14 years in prison in the fashion of a true Satyagrahee despite family problems, he said and recalled that he had translated the speeches of Netaji Subash Chandra Bose when the latter had visited Andhra Pradesh. He also earned the sobriquet of "Netaji of A.P.".

Making a passionate plea for religious harmony in the country, Prof. Dandavate said even Mahatma Gandhi had put communal harmony above freedom from foreign powers.

The Union Minister of State for Urban Affairs and Employment, Mr. B. Dattatreya, said it was necessary to include a lesson on the life and times of Madduri Annapoornaiah in the school curriculum so that the present generation would get to know the selfless sacrifices made by people like him. Pointing out that Madduri lived and

died in penury but never aspired for the freedom fighters' pension, he said others should emulate him particularly in the light of bogus claims being made for such pensions.

The principles and ideology for which Madduri Annapoornaiah stood for were relevant to this day, said Mr. P. Ashok Gajapathi Raju. Finance Minister. He recalled the journalistic days of the freedom fighter where publications were cyclostyled in the absence of printing presses. Freedom fighters, Mr. Vavilala Gopalakrishnaiah and Mr. Gouthu Latchanna said Madduri never compromised on his principles and his spirit of self sacrifice was necessary now for the nation.

Mr. P. Upendra, MP, Mr. Srikrishna, communist leader, Mr. B.V. Raghavulu, CPI(M) State secretary, Mr. A.B.K. Prasad, veteran journalist, Mr. A.V.K. Chaitanya, general secretary, Birth Centenary Celebrations Committee, spoke. The son and daughter of Madduri Annapoornaiah were honoured on the occasion. A special souvenir on Madduri was also released.

**The Hindu Dated 22.3.99**



# A tribute to a great leader

## *Madduri Annapoornaiah - A Centenary Tribute*

edited by A.V.K.Chaitanya, Rs. 50, Pages 148 For copies:

Madduri Annapoornaiah Birth Centenary Celebration Committee, 173, Lalitha Nagar, Hyderabad - 500 044.

Madduri Annapoornaiah (1899-1954), who spent a quarter of his life in jail for writing and publishing 'inflammatory' articles against the British and taking part in the freedom struggle, neither craved for a place in history nor expected future generations to remember him in gratitude. (Did he have a premonition that we are destined to be a thankless lot?)

A first generation freedom fighter from Andhra, Annapoornaiah became a hero when he, as the editor of the periodical Congress, dared to publish a playlet called *Chichchula Pidugu* written by an unidentified playwright (it was written by Ramachandruni Venkatappa). It was a panegyric to the legendary 1857 freedom fighter Mangal Pandey. The British found the play inflammatory and violative of their press laws and the 25 year old editor was arrested. Jarred by the public outcry against the arrest, the administration offered him a deal; he would be released if he disclosed the name of the play wright. Annapoornaiah turned down the offer, taking a stand for journalistic ethics.

Born in 1899, Annapoornaiah plunged into the freedom struggle in 1920, responding to the call given by Gandhi in the Calcutta Congress and continued to serve the people till he breathed his last at the age of 56.

A congressman in his early days, he was attracted to the Socialist group within the party (which went on to form the Congress Socialist Party) and then to Netaji's Forward Bloc. A close associate of both Jayaprakash Narayan and Netaji, Annapoornaiah was the father of Socialist movement in the South. He edited several Telugu news letters, *Congress, Navashakti, Jai Bharat and Velugu*. He was a childhood friend of Alluri Seetharamaraju.

The Madduri Annapoornaiah Birth Centenary Celebration Committee has brought out this souvenir as a belated tribute to the fearless editor and Socialist leader. It contains articles written by his associates, friends and followers (Vavilala Gopalakrishnaiah, G Krishna, A.V.K. Chaitanya, A.B.K. Prasad, Maadala Veerabhadra Rao, Polapragada Satyanarayana Murthy and V.S. Narasinga Rao), a selection of his editorials and the playlet *Chichchula Pidugu* which landed him in jail.

Annapoornaiah wrote a series of autobiographical accounts under the column *Naa Anubhavaalu* (My Experiences) in *Jai Bharat* which were very popular with the readers of the paper. Some of these articles have also been included in the souvenir.

Piecing together the reflections of Annapoornaiah, his followers and friends give us many insights into his interesting personality.

Although his contribution to our society is quite evident - and evidently quiteluminous - it is an inescapable fact that subsequent generations have not given Annapoornaiah his due place in history.

This centenary publication goes some way towards filling that void. However, justice might have been in a fuller measure had the publishers commissioned articles from social scientists analysing Annapoornaiah's contribution to politics and journalism.

**- K.V. KURMANATH**

**New Indian Express**  
**May 7, 1999**





**CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS AT VISAKHAPATNAM ON APRIL 1999.** Sri. Anjaneyulu, M.L.A., Sri. G. Lavanam, Sri. P.V. Chalapathi Rao, Sri. Tammineni Seetaram Minister for Information, Govt. of Andhra Pradesh, Sri. A.V.K. Chaitanya, Sri. Piratla Venkateswarlu.



**CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS AT RAJAHMUNDRY ON 20.3.1999 AT ANNAPURNAIAH PARK.** Y. Narasimha Rao, Pativada Suryanarayana, Vavilala Gopalakrishnaiah, K.S. Sastry, P. Kuruvankasa Rao, A.C.Y. Reddy.



## The Author

**Prof. I.V. Chalapathi Rao**, Editor of *TRIVENI*, a 72 years old Cultural Quarterly of India, has written many books in English and Telugu and edited several journals including the souvenir of the First World Telugu Conference.

His books include 'Mahatma Gandhi', 'Lives of Great Men', 'My Life's Journey' (Life of Tanguturi Prakasam), 'Andhra Ratna Duggirala Gopala Krishnaiah', 'Durgabai Deshmukh', 'R.V.K. M. Suryaraya Bahadur', 'Great Minds', 'The Fifth Estate', 'Sankara', 'Communication and Leadership', 'College Teachers and Administrators' and 'Our Centres of Learning'.

He is an Educationist and Director of S.C.E.R.T, Dy. Director of Higher Education, Registrar of the Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages, Co-Ordinator of Association of Indian Universities and Chairman of the Forum of Higher Education.